Merger of BSNL and MTNL

†740. SHRI PYARELAL KHANDELWAL: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have received report from the Expert Committee constituted for the merger of BSNL and MTNL;

(b) if so, the main recommendations thereof;

(c) whether action on the said recommendations has been initiated;

(d) if not, the reasons therefor; and

(e) whether any measures have been suggested in the above report to effectively check the corruption prevalent in the BSNL?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (DR. SHAKEEL AHMAD): (a) and (b) The Consultants' report is under examination. The Consultants have studied several options and found that "acquisition of MTNL by BSNL and IPO by BSNL" is a preferred option.

(c) and (d) There are several complex issues relating to Human Resources (HR), stamp duties and other costs etc. involved in the restructuring exercise, which are being examined.

(e) No, Sir.

Expansion of communication services in rural areas

†741. SHRI PYARELAL KHANDELWAL: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that there is reduction in Government's interest in the expansion of communication services in rural areas;

(b) whether it is also a fact that in rural areas, people have to wait for eight years after the registration for telephone connections;

(c) if so, the reasons therefor; and

† Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.

(d) the details of the waiting list of old registrations (especially in rural areas) of more than eight years throughout the country, State-wise?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (DR. SHAKEELAHMAD): (a) No, Sir, Universal Service Obligation Fund (USOF) is supporting the provision of telecom facilities in the rural areas of the country. USOF has entered into an agreement with Bharat Sanchar Nigam Limited (BSNL) and Private Service Providers for provision of following communication services in rural areas:—

(i) Provision of Village Public Telephones (VPTs) by November, 2007 in all the remaining 66,822 unconnected eligible villages as on November, 2004 excluding villages having less than 100 population, lying in thick forest areas/naxalite infested areas etc. 49,640 of these villages remain to be connected as on 31.12.2005.

(ii) Provision of Rural Community Phones (RCPs) in villages with population more than 2,000 and where there are no Public Call Offices (PCOs)

(iii) Replacement of Multi-Access Radio Relay (MARR) VPTs.

(iv) Provision of individual rural phone connections (RDELs) on demand in 1,685 commercially unviable Short Distance Charging Areas (SDCAs).

(v) Large scale deployment of Wireless in Local Loop (WLL) network in rural areas.

Additionally, BSNL is in the process of issuing a tender for 60 million lines, (mobile), one third of which is expected to benefit coverage in rural areas.

(b) and (c) The waiting list of more than eight years is about 0.22 per cent of the total waiting list in rural areas. This waiting list of more than eight years is mostly from far-flung and scattered areas where laying of telecom network is techno-commercially not feasible.

(d) A statement including the status of State-wise waiting list of BSNL in respect of old registrations of more than 8 years is enclosed.

Statement

Status of State-wise waiting list of old registration of more than 8 years

Sl. No.	State/UT	Waiting List
1.	Andhra Pradesh	0
2.	Assam	0
3.	Bihar	0
4.	Chhattisgarh	0
5.	Gujarat	326
6.	Haryana	3
7.	Himachal Pradesh	152
8.	Jammu & Kashmir	0
9.	Jharkhand	0
10.	Karnataka	157
11.	Kerala	179
12.	Madhya Pradesh	0
13.	Maharashtra	347
14.	Goa	0
15.	Meghalaya	0
16.	Mizoram	0
17.	Tripura	0
18.	Arunachal Pradesh	0
19.	Nagaland	0
20.	Manipur	0
21.	Orissa	0
22.	Punjab	0
23.	Rajasthan	1.536
24.	Tamil Nadu	0

Sl. No.	State/UT	Waiting List
25.	Uttaranchal	29
26.	Uttar Pradesh	0
27.	West Bengal	0
28.	Sikkim	0
29.	Andaman & Nicobar	0
30.	Chandigarh	0
31.	Daman & Diu	0
32.	Dadra & Nagar Haveli	0
33.	Lakshadweep	0
34.	Pondichery	0
	TOTAL:	2729

R&D Programme for postal servcies

†742. PROF. ALKA BALRAM KSHATRIYA: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state:

(a) whether there is no research and development programme for technological development related to postal services with Department of Posts;

(b) if so, the reasons therefor; and

(c) if not, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (DR. SHAKEELAHMAD): (a) No, Sir.

(b) Does not arise in view of (a) above.

(c) The Research and Development (R & D) activities including those for technological development related to postal services are carried out at 7 Postal Training Centres and 4 Software Development Centres

† Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.